Stroke: Know the Signs. Call 911.

A stroke is an emergency. Every minute counts.

BE FAST Look for anything that comes on suddenly.

		CHECK	CALL 911 IF YOU SEE
B	**Balance**	Ask: "Do you feel dizzy or off balance?"	Sudden trouble walking, loss of balance or coordination
E	**Eyes**	Ask: "Can you see normally?"	Sudden blurred or double vision, or loss of sight in one or both eyes
F	**Face**	Ask for a smile.	One side of the face droops
A	**Arms**	Ask to raise both arms.	One arm drifts down or is weak
S	**Speech**	Ask to repeat a short sentence.	Speech is slurred, strange or hard to understand
T	**Time**	**Call 911 right away.**	**Any one sign is enough.**

Also call 911 for **sudden confusion or trouble understanding**, or a **sudden severe headache with no known cause**.

While waiting for the ambulance

1. **Call 911.** Do not drive to the hospital. The ambulance crew can start care on the way.
2. **Write down the time** the signs started: _____. If nobody saw it start, write the last time things seemed normal.
3. **Unlock the front door** and turn on the outside light.
4. **Get the medication list and insurance cards** ready for the crew. Fill in the box below today.
5. **Nothing goes in the mouth.** Do not let the person go to sleep. No food, no drinks, no pills. **No aspirin.** Some strokes are caused by bleeding, and aspirin may make them worse.
6. **Stay close.** Keep the person comfortable and watch for changes to tell the crew.

If the signs go away, call 911 anyway.

A mini stroke (TIA) is a warning sign and needs care right away.

On the phone and something sounds wrong?

Slurred words, confusion or trouble finding words may be the first sign anyone notices. If you are not there, call 911 and give the full street address and town. Then call a neighbor or family member who can get to the door.

Fill in today. Keep on the fridge.

Name: _____ Date of birth: _____

Doctor: _____ Phone: _____

Takes a blood thinner? Yes / No: _____ Which one: _____

Allergies: _____

Emergency contact: _____ Phone: _____

Medication list is kept: _____

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Questions about help at home? Call us for a consultation with our nurse at no cost.

This sheet is general information, not medical advice. In an emergency, call 911.

Coming Home After a Stroke

A checklist for the first weeks

Before leaving the hospital or rehab, ask:

- ☐ Which problems should we watch for, and who do we call? Name and number: _____
- ☐ Which medicines are new, which stopped, and which changed? Get the list in writing.
- ☐ Was a swallow test done? Which foods and drinks are allowed?
- ☐ What equipment is needed (walker, shower chair, commode, grab bars)? Who delivers it?
- ☐ What therapy comes next: home health visits, outpatient or inpatient rehab? Start date: _____
- ☐ Which daily tasks still need help: bathing, dressing, the bathroom, stairs, meals?
- ☐ Ask the staff to show the family how to help with transfers or exercises. Practice before leaving.
- ☐ Get written discharge instructions that are easy to read and understand.

The first week home

- ☐ Clear the path from bed to bathroom. Add night lights.
- ☐ Arrange for someone to stay overnight the first nights.
- ☐ Give medicines exactly as listed. Never stop one without asking the doctor or pharmacist.
- ☐ Follow the food and drink textures the care team ordered.
- ☐ Call the doctor about coughing or choking while eating or drinking.
- ☐ Put every follow-up appointment on one calendar.

The first months

- ☐ Keep up the home exercise program from the therapist.
- ☐ Watch mood. Sadness, low energy or loss of interest may be signs of depression, which is common after a stroke. Tell the doctor.
- ☐ Tell the doctor or physical therapist about every fall, even if no one is hurt. They will tell you what to keep reporting.
- ☐ Trouble with words? Use short sentences, turn off the TV or radio, allow time to answer, and do not correct.
- ☐ Know BE FAST. A second stroke is possible. Call 911 for any sign.
- ☐ Look after the caregiver too. Ask for help before running out of steam.

Help in Gloucester County

Gloucester County Division of Senior Services: 856-384-6900

Stroke centers designated by the NJ Department of Health: Comprehensive: Jefferson Washington Township Hospital. **Primary:** Inspira Medical Center Mullica Hill.

Sources

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